

## HOW ALL OF IT STARTED – SOME REMINISCENCES ABOUT THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIA IN THE STABILITY SERIES

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**Keywords:** Stability, First International Colloquia, Reminiscences.

*Abstract: The author, who during the period 1977 – 2002 was linked with the preparation of five international stability colloquia, gives some brief information about all of them. He starts with the first one, organised jointly by Prof. Otto Halász and himself in 1977 and held at Balatonfüred; and then briefly reports about four subsequent colloquia, prepared jointly with Prof. Miklos Iványi and held in Tihányi and Budapest in 1986, 1990, 1995 and 2002.. For each of them he presents historical background, some technical information and personal reminiscences.*

The author is grateful to Profs Eduardo Batista and Pedro Vellasco, the main organisers of the Rio de Janeiro International Colloquium „Stability and Ductility of Steel Structures“ for enabling him to write a few sentences in regard to the history of the preceding five international stability colloquia held in Central Europe. It was a privilege and pleasure for the author of this short contribution to be linked with the preparation of all of them.

The whole story started in the middle of the seventies, in 1975 to put it more accurately, when Prof. Otto Halász, then Head of the Department of Steel Structures and Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering of Budapest University, and most importantly an excellent expert on steel construction and a very good man, invited the author to organise with him an international stability colloquium. After some discussion it was decided, account taken of the fact that Prof. Halász was then Dean of the Civil Engineering Faculty and held other important functions at Budapest University and was consequently able to provide adequate support for the colloquium, to hold the colloquium in Budapest. The author agreed and so Prof. Halász became chairman and the author vice-chairman of the scientific committee for the event.

Of course, we knew that our colloquium was not going to be the first international stability conference and were aware of the fact that similar colloquia would take place in Tokyo, Liege and Washington before our event, all of them being organised under the sponsorship of the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering, the European Convention for Constructional Steelwork, and the United States Structural Stability Research Council. All of these conferences were attributed the adjective „regional“, and Otto Halász and the author just wanted to organise another regional stability colloquium, this time in Central Europe.

Our conference was then held at Balatonfüred in October 1977 and proved to be a success, with practically all of the stars in the sky of stability research attending it. So the event significantly surpassed the character of a regional colloquium and became a real international conference. 56 contributions were presented there, which were divided into the following sessions: (i) Stability problems in national specifications (4 contributions), (ii) Compressed members (6 contributions), (iii) Frames (9 contributions), (iv) Lateral buckling (4 contributions), (v) Plate and box girders (11 contributions), (vi) Shells (7 contributions), (vii) Special problem (8 contributions), and (viii) Experimental research (7 contributions). The success of the conference was also supported by its beautiful setting, i.e. by the pretty

shores of the Balaton Lake, which looked particularly attractive in the sunshine of the second half of October 1977.

Given the success of this colloquium, Otto Halász and the author decided to repeat it in the middle of the eighties, and in October 1985 the writer spent two days in the flat of Prof. Halász, during which they performed an important part of the preparatory work for this Stability Colloquium No 2. Otto Halász was then already seriously ill, but still very active and enthusiastic about the Colloquium. It was decided that the author should again come to Budapest in February so that they could put a finishing touch to the preparation of the event. Consequently at the beginning of February the writer telephoned Otto Halász's flat and was told by him that he was going to be transported to hospital for several days and that they should fix up the author's visit to Budapest thereafter, i.e. in a week or so later on. But this thereafter did not come; never thereafter had the writer the pleasure of talking to Otto Halász any more, since a few days after that they phoned him from Budapest (it was Dr Veröci, senior member of Prof. Halász's staff, who called) to let him know that Prof. Halász had died. They also posed the question of what should be done about the International Stability Conference under preparation.

So the author travelled to Budapest, met Prof. Miklos Iványi, who was then Head of the Department of Steel Structures, and his colleagues. It was decided that the preparations for the Stability Colloquium No 2 should go on. Prof. Iványi became chairman of the Scientific Committee of the Colloquium and the author retained the job of vice-chairman. They were very significantly supported by the staff of the Department of Steel Structures, by Prof. Dunai, Dr Veröci, Dr Hegedus and others. And also by the whole Budapest University of Technology and Economics, and most helpful was also international support which we received from the US Structural Stability Research Council (Prof. T.V.Galambos, one of the leading members of SSRC, was invited to be Honorary Chairman of the Scientific Committee of the Colloquium) and the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering. The writer of this short contribution is very grateful to all of the aforesaid.

Together, proceeding hand in hand, we organised four international stability colloquia - in Tihányi in 1986 and in Budapest in 1990, 1995 and 2002.. And the author would like to pay his tribute to Miklos Iványi and the other members of Budapest Department of Steel Structures, who had most of the work on their shoulders. We hope that it can be said that these colloquia were useful and successful; we hope that we can say that these colloquia surpassed the modest wish we had with Otto Halász, i.e. to organise a regional stability conference, and that we can say that they became real world-wide events, with members of their scientific committees, general reporters, chairmen of conference sessions, and authors of conference contributions coming from all continents. Later also the framework of the conferences was extended and they became colloquia on the stability and ductility of steel structures.

It should also be mentioned at this juncture that the last in the series, i.e. the colloquium held in 2002, was organised as a Professor Otto Halász memorial session; by which we desired to express our esteem to the man who was the main organiser of the first conference in the whole series.

100 contributions, written by European, American, Japanese and Australian authors, were presented at this colloquium, and they were divided into the following sessions: (i) Compressed members and beams (16 papers), (ii) Cold-formed members ( 13 papers), (iii) Frames ( 11 papers), (iv) Ductility problems ( 6 papers), (v) Plated structures (11 papers), (vi) Shells (5 papers), (vii) Bridges and special problems) (9 papers), (viii) Composite structures ( 4 papers), (ix) Earthquake and fire (16 papers), and (x) general concepts (9 papers). To appreciate the important role of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the preparation of the Colloquium, one of its distinguished members, Prof. J. Szabo, was invited to be Honorary Chairman of the Scientific Committee.

But the writer of this short contribution would also like to pay tribute to a great number of excellent scientists and engineers, coming from all parts of the globe, who were members of the international scientific committees of the colloquia, general reporters and chairmen of their sessions, and authors of papers and contributors to conference discussions. It is also their merit that the colloquia proved to be a success.

Dear colleagues, it was a privilege and pleasure for me to cooperate with you. And many thanks for this cooperation of yours. My desire once more to thank you is one of the reasons for my writing this short paper.

Once the series of the five international stability colloquia described above was completed, the question arose of how to continue, i.e. at what venue and with what new organisers to continue. And in this respect we were fortunate, and it was a pleasure for the author to see it, that this continuation should get into the skilful hands of (i) Prof. Dinar Camotim and (ii) Prof. Eduardo Batista and Prof. Pedro Vellasco, who in addition to being first-class researchers in the domain of stability are also very good organisers. Prof. Camotim, although most of the preparatory work was only on his shoulders, did excellent work in organising the 2006 Lisbon "edition" of the colloquia, and it is certain that our Rio de Janeiro colleagues, Profs Batista and Vellasco, will do the same in the case of the Rio de Janeiro Stability and Ductility Conference. Good luck and best wishes.